

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims

What is claimed is:

1. **(Currently Amended)** In well drilling operations, A a system for controlling the density of balancing of drilling fluid in a wellbore having a first end adjacent the surface and a second end, said system in well drilling operations, comprising:
 - a. a drill string having a top end and a bottom end, the top end of said drill string being located at the surface, the bottom end of said drill string being located in the wellbore adjacent the second end of said wellbore, said drill string for delivering a drilling first fluid having a predetermined first density from the surface to the wellbore;
 - b. a drill bit connected to the bottom end of the drill string; and
 - c. a first fluid having a first density disposed in said drill string;
 - d. a wellhead injection apparatus extending into said wellbore from said first end of the wellbore to a location removed from said second end of the wellbore, said injection apparatus for delivering a base second fluid having a predetermined second density from the surface into the wellbore to create a combination fluid,
 - e. a second fluid having a second density disposed in said wellbore at a location removed from said second end of said wellbore;
 - f. a first fluid column comprising said first fluid formed in said wellbore; and
 - g. a second fluid column comprising a second fluid formed in said wellbore between said first fluid column and said first end of the wellbore, wherein

- h. said ~~base second~~ fluid ~~having has~~ a density greater than the density of the ~~drilling~~ ~~first~~ fluid ~~such that a gradient is formed between said first and second fluid~~ ~~columns, said combination fluid having a predetermined density that is defined by a selected ratio of the drilling fluid and the base fluid, said combination fluid rising to the surface.~~
2. **(Original)** The system of claim 1, further comprising a drilling rig located at the surface to facilitate offshore well drilling operations.
3. **(Currently Amended)** The system of claim 2, further comprising a charging line having an upper end located at the surface and a lower end connected to the wellhead injection apparatus, said charging line for establishing communication between the surface and the wellhead injection apparatus to facilitate delivery of the ~~base second~~ fluid from the surface into the wellbore.
4. **(Currently Amended)** The system of claim 3, further comprising a riser having an upper end located at the surface and a lower end connected to the wellbore ~~adjacent the first top end of said wellbore and a return fluid disposed in said riser~~, said riser for delivering ~~the combination~~ ~~said return~~ fluid from the wellbore to the surface.
5. **(Currently Amended)** The system of claim 4, further comprising:
 - a. a rotating head device connected to the lower end of the riser, said rotating head device for blocking ~~flow of said~~ return ~~flow of the combination~~ fluid from the wellbore into the riser when actuated; and
 - b. a return line having an upper end located at the surface and a lower end connected to the rotating head device, said return line for establishing communication between the surface and the wellbore to facilitate delivery of said return ~~the combination~~ fluid from the wellbore to the surface when the rotating head device is actuated.

6. **(Currently Amended)** The system of claim 5, further comprising a separation unit located at the surface for separating the combination return fluid into a base first fluid component and a drilling second fluid component.
7. **(Currently Amended).** The system of claim 1, wherein said wellbore is substantially vertical and said second fluid column is located above said first fluid column the density of the drilling fluid is adapted to facilitate underbalanced drilling operations.
8. **(Currently Amended).** The system of claim 1, wherein said wellbore is further characterized by a cased section extending from said first end of the wellbore and a uncased production section extending from said second end of the wellbore, said injection apparatus extending to a location within said cased section and said second fluid disposed in said wellbore within said cased section the density of the drilling fluid is adapted to facilitate near balanced drilling operations.
9. **(New)** A method for balancing the pressure in a wellbore defined by a first end adjacent the surface and a second end below the surface, said wellbore having a drill string extending from above the wellbore to a location adjacent the second end of said wellbore, said method comprising the steps of:
 - (a) introducing a first fluid having a first density into the drillstring;
 - (b) discharging said first fluid from said drill string adjacent the second end of said wellbore to form a first column of fluid within said wellbore;
 - (c) introducing a second fluid having a second density greater than the first density into said wellbore at a location removed from said second end of said wellbore to form a second column of fluid within said wellbore, wherein said second column of fluid is formed between said first column and said first end of said wellbore; and

(d) establishing a gradient between said first and second columns.

10. (New) The method of Claim 9, further comprising the step of adjusting said second column to adjust fluid balancing in the wellbore.
11. (New) The method of Claim 10, wherein the step of adjusting comprises altering the density of at least one of said fluids.
12. (New) The method of Claim 10, wherein the step of adjusting comprises altering the volume of the second column.
13. (New) The method of Claim 9, wherein said second fluid is introduced into the wellbore via an injection member extending into said wellbore from the first end of said wellbore to a location removed from said second end of said wellbore.
14. (New) The method of Claim 9, wherein an extraction member is positioned in said wellbore at a location removed from said second end of said wellbore and said second column is adjusted so as to cause said first fluid to flow upward through said extraction member.
15. (New) The method of Claim 10, wherein the step of adjusting is adapted to facilitate underbalanced drilling operations.
16. (New) The method of Claim 10, wherein the step of adjusting is adapted to facilitate near-balanced drilling operations.
17. (New) The method of Claim 9, wherein said first fluid is discharged into an uncased production zone of said wellbore adjacent the second end of said wellbore and said second fluid is introduced into said wellbore in a cased section of said wellbore that is removed from the second end of said wellbore.

18. (New) The method of Claim 9, wherein said wellbore is substantially vertical and said second column of fluid is formed above said first column of fluid.

19. (New) In well drilling operations, a system for controlling the balancing of drilling fluid in a wellbore having a top end and a bottom end and further characterized by a cased section extending from said top end of the wellbore and an uncased production section extending from said bottom end of the wellbore, said system comprising:

- a. a drill string having a first end and a second end, the first end of said drill string being located above the top end of the wellbore, the bottom end of said drill string being located adjacent the bottom end of the wellbore;
- b. a drill bit connected to the bottom end of the drill string;
- c. a first fluid having a first density and forming a first fluid column in said wellbore, said first fluid column extending upward from said bottom end of said wellbore; and
- d. a second fluid having a second density and forming a second fluid column in said wellbore above said first fluid column, wherein
- e. said second fluid has a density greater than the density of the first fluid.

20. (New) The system of claim 19, wherein, said first fluid column is formed substantially in said uncased production section and said second fluid column is formed substantially in said cased section.